IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 4 with the following:

Tracking of which line cards are performing what processes on which packets can be handled in several ways. An architecture that enables this distribution of processing may be referred to as Distributed Control Plane Architecture (DCPA). This is discussed in more detail in co-pending patent application US Patent Application No. ~~10/XXX,XXX,~~ 10/713,237, "Distributed Control Plane Architecture for Network Elements," filed November 14, 2003. The DCPA is exemplified by a DCPA Infrastructure Module that contains the logic required by a control card or line card to discover control cards or line cards present in a system, establish connectivity with them, and exchange information about their capabilities. The DIM would execute on both the control card and the line card in Figure 2. The use of such architecture allows the distribution of processing to occur.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 15 with the following:

In addition, a virtual interface may be used to receive the incoming packets and determine to which entity the packet should be routed. An example of such an interface is shown in co-pending patent application, "Implementation Of Control Plane Protocols And Networking Stacks In A Distributed Network Device," US Patent Application No. ~~10/XXX,XXX,~~ 10/714,412, filed November 14, 2003. The use of architectures and interfaces such as these allow the distribution process to remain coordinated.